

**IN THE ABSTRACT:**

Please add the following abstract:

Suture needles are a significant safety hazard for medical workers, mainly because of accidental needlestick injuries. Disclosed herein are safety suture needle assemblies and related methods. In particular, variations of a safety suture needle having an activatable sheath or flexible extension member are disclosed. The implementation of certain embodiments of the disclosed invention can result in a desired improvement in safety, including the prevention of unwanted needle punctures, while achieving efficient suturing.